

# PEOPLE and THINGS: By ATTICUS

THE life of Juho Kusti Paasikivi, who is eighty-five today, is also the life of modern Finland, and to congratulate him is also to congratulate his country on withstanding so bravely the slings and arrows that history has unceasingly flung against her in this century.

The recent Russian settlement with Finland is perhaps a grudging bow to Finland's stubborn attitude, and so far as her President is concerned, it is noteworthy that he is the only non-Communist recipient of the Order of Lenin. Perhaps Mr. Nehru will soon share this distinction.

## Bob Sherwood's Speeches

AFTER reading the warm-hearted British and American tributes to Robert Sherwood, I am surprised to find how little attention has been paid to his long career as one of President Roosevelt's chief ghost writers.

On this side of the Atlantic there is reluctance to recognise the high status that political speech writers have now obtained. Bob Sherwood once shared this reluctance and when he was recruited to the White House by Harry Hopkins in 1940, he refused to believe that Roosevelt did not write every word of his own speeches. He changed his mind only when he heard his own phrases coming from the President's lips.

He stayed on at the White House until the end, and President Roosevelt was actually working on the draft of a Sherwood speech a few moments before his death in 1945.

## The Peter Pan MS.

ON the eve of the pantomime season, I reproduce below the first of the original manuscripts of "Peter Pan," which Barrie gave in 1928 to Lady Cynthia Asquith, who was his secretary from 1918 until his death in 1937.

The reference to this being the only MS. of Peter Pan in existence

MS. of Billy Pan  
No. of one in existence to him?  
copy to Lady Cynthia Asquith  
for her collection.  
John Barrie  
Dec 1928

"so far as I know" is puzzling, but it seems that Barrie may have written the play out by hand at some previous time, since Lady Cynthia has heard that another apparently original manuscript was given by him to Maude Adams, the American actress who played Peter in the States.

## A Barrie Sale

The mystery of the second copy has not been cleared up and the American MS. has never been traced, while American libraries and private collectors have offered huge sums for Lady Cynthia's MS. She tells me, however, that she

has no intention of parting with "Peter Pan," nor with the manuscript of "The Wheel"—a little-known Barrie play which has so far been produced only on the amateur stage.

But a number of Barrie manuscripts which she owns jointly with Peter Davies the publisher (and to his mid embarrassment, the original of Peter Pan) are to be sold at Sotheby's in the spring.

## Queen and Kremlin

ASSOCIATED TELEVISION has announced that on Christmas Day the Queen's Speech will follow a thirty-minute programme called "Christmas in the Kremlin". It seems odd that the company spokesman should have used the same Press conference to announce a policy of reducing the extent to which material of contrasting quality and subject matter is in juxtaposition.

This arbitrary "juxtaposition" reminds me of a visit I made some years ago to the room off the Commercial Road, where Stalin stayed during his trip to London in 1953. The occupant had decorated the walls with portraits of Stalin and the Queen and linked them with a coloured Christmas streamer.

## "The Kindergarten" . . .

A FASCINATING photograph in the newly published life of Geoffrey Dawson, a group of the famous "Milner Kindergarten" in South Africa in 1908, struck a sad chord for me when I opened the book on Thursday. For in the very middle of the group is an earnest, long-faced young man, Lionel Curtis, of whose death I had just learnt.

It made me wonder who among all those young men of destiny would be ranked, hereafter, the greater: Herbert Baker, whose architectural compels remembrance in Africa, London, Oxford, Delhi? Philip Kerr, who as Marquess of Lothian held the Embassy at Washington at the outbreak of war? The present Lord Brand, a great banker? Patrick Duncan, Governor-General of the Union? "Dougie" Malcolm, President and statesman of the Chartered Company? Geoffrey Dawson, Editor of "The Times"? Or any of the others?

Will it not be Lionel Curtis, no statesman, no man of business, but aptly nicknamed "The Prophet"?

## . . . and "The Prophet"

Lionel Curtis was the greatest, not only for the mark he left, anonymously and unknown to the public, on the constitutional history of South Africa, India, Ireland, the Commonwealth generally, but also for something else of which this photograph reminds us—his profound influence on the lives of others.

There is not one in the group who would not have acknowledged that he owed to Lionel Curtis something at least of what he was and did. And today there must be hundreds of men, young and old, whose lives have been changed by "The Prophet's"

example, urgency and unquestioning belief that others would serve a cause as single-mindedly as he did himself.

## Field for Collectors

ON Thursday the largest collection in the world of wine labels or "bottle-picks" as they were known in the eighteenth century, is coming up for sale at Sotheby's.

My colleague Autolycus tells me that there will be nearly 2,000 for sale, in mother-of-pearl, ivory, enamel and silver. He suggests that antique collectors of modern means should pay more attention to them.

They are to be found in antique and junk shops all over the land and even the most beautiful of them can still be bought cheaply.

## Knip Nig

The one I reproduce with of the our Ambassador at Lisbon, whose treaty in 1703 brought



Battersea enamel specimen which may fetch £20 or so.

My other illustration shows a euphemism for gin devised to discourage pilfering by servants. With the same intent an American label is inscribed Coleridge Hair Tonic.

Another says Methuen in honour of the our Ambassador at Lisbon, whose treaty in 1703 brought



cheap port to England. The only label that even baffles the experts is mysteriously called Bushby.

## Athletic Diplomacy

THE panjandrums of Russian athletics must be laughing as they read the Duke of Edinburgh's speech appealing for £75,000 to send our team to the 1956 Olympics. The Duke spurned the idea of appealing for Government funds: "The team we want to send should be composed of amateurs and not temporary Civil Servants."

"Temporary Civil Servants, indeed," I can hear the echoes from Moscow, "all our people are firmly established."

But although the Russians need not worry about money for the fares to Melbourne, they have diplomatic difficulties of their own making. After the Petrov incident Russia broke off all diplomatic and commercial relations with Australia.

## Olympian Platitudes

Now the Russians are running towards the horns of a dilemma, for the movement of a Soviet athletic team of two or three hundred with its attendant squad of coaches and commissars is very much a diplomatic affair.

At the moment the odds seem to favour the restoration of diplomatic relations before the Melbourne Games begin next November. This could be done with a

fine flourish of Olympian platitudes, and would also let the Russians openly re-enter the Australian wool market.

## Cars of Tomorrow

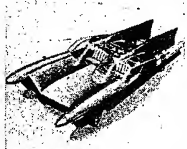
WHILE Mr. Ferguson's back-room boys work away on their car of the future, Detroit is not idle. From its laboratories and studios the "New York Times" has extracted some secrets of the automobile of 1975.

Briefly, it will be lower, have curved side windows and body panels, tinted glass roofs retractable at the press of a button, sliding doors, air-conditioning and built-in telephones, television screens, razors and electric hot-points for picnicking.

## All Mod. Con.

In 1975, seats will swivel and have a push-button for raising, lowering and tilting. Polarised lights, ten times as brilliant as today's headlamps, will not bother oncoming drivers.

The engine will be a gas turbine, burning kerosene, and will be at



N.Y. Times.

Detroit's Dream Car  
The rear. To help the driver manipulate his vehicle, electromagnetic strips will be laid on the surface of express-ways to guide the automatic steering.

The motorist will drive on to the highway under manual control, set a dashboard instrument to the appropriate speed, pick up the electro-magnetic "beam," then sit back and presumably either

watch the television, brew tea or shave

## All Seats Unbookable

"DIPPE DREAM," the latest Rodgers and Hammerstein musical, opens in New York on Wednesday, and the Shubert Theatre is already able to announce that, "beginning with May," tickets are available for all performances.

The principal parts will be filled by Bill Johnson, who has often sung over here, and Helen Traubel, the Wagnerian soprano. Two years ago she left the Metropolitan Opera Company when Rudolf Bing objected to her singing at a Chicago night club.

## A Secret Service

The purchase of tickets for Rodgers and Hammerstein's early world-beater, "Oklahoma!" once impinged on high strategy.

During the Quebec Conference in 1943, Major-General "Wild Bill" Donovan asked permission for the American Secret Service—O.S.S.—to operate in Admiral Mountbatten's South-East Asia command.

"I will test the efficiency of your organisation," Admiral Mountbatten told him. "If your men can get me two tickets for 'Oklahoma!' next week, they will have proved their mettle."

General Donovan got the tickets O.S.S. went into South-East Asia

## Few Words

MR. SOMERSET MAUGHAM was the guest of honour at the Saints and Sinners Club luncheon on Tuesday, and he made a characteristic speech—neat, urbane, and extremely short. After graceful compliments to his host, Mr. Bid Flanagan and to the richly assorted guests Mr. Maugham simply said: "I have lived so long that I have already many times repeated all I have got to say on every conceivable topic. So I will now shut up and sit down."